



Week 1: Card Sorting

Card sorting works as follows:

- Write down each topic on a filing (index) card or post-it note.
- Give the pile of cards` to a number of users and ask them to group the cards into piles of logical groups (according to their own perceptions).
- Provide meaningful names for each group.
- Break into smaller groups, if too many have been created.
- Separate out larger groups, if too few have been created.
- Collate the results, and make use of them when completing the information design.

This is a very simple, and often very effective, method of working with users to come up with a usable design.

A card sorting exercise does not produce a finished information design. There are many other inputs into the information design process, such as:

- business requirements
- strategic directions
- technical goals and limitations
- usability guidelines

All of this information must be taken into account when structuring your content. That being said, the card sorting will give you an excellent starting point for this work, as it will inform you of how real users think.

Hands-on sessions with users will generate debate and discussion, and turn up other gems and tidbits of useful data.

Useful reading: Card sorting - A definitive guide at

http://www.bboxesandarrows.com/archives/card_sorting_a_definitive_guide.php

- A thorough look at card sorting, including detailed instructions and variations on the technique.